given funds to a former Prime Minister's family of the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) and (b) Govt. is aware of allegations regarding pay offs by BCCI to some leaders of South Asia that figured in the hearing before a Sub Committee of the US Senate. However, as per information available, the testimony in this regard could not provide details to substantiate the charges and the Sub Committee is learnt to have decided not to seriously pursue the matter further.

Smuggling of Computer Components into India

1781. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the current volume of smuggling of computer components, peripherals and spares are anything between Rs. 150 crores and Rs. 600 crores per year in Bombay alone as per the news item entitled "Enter the hi-tech Smugglers" which appeared in the Times of India of the 3rd October, 1991;

(b) if so, what are the facts in this regard; and

(c) what remedial steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b) The Government are aware of the Newsitem and available reports indicate that high value computer components, peripherals and spares have become sensitive to smuggling into the country. At Sahar Airport, Bombay, alone, computer parts worth Rs. 2.88 crores have been seized in 23 cases during the current calendar year upto November, 1991. However, since smuggling is a clandestine activity. it is not feasible to estimate the extent of the smuggling of such goods.

(c) All the preventive and anti-smuggling agencies have been suitably alerted and are vigilant against the smuggling of these goods. Baggage of suspected passengers is being examined and screened. Sophisticated equipment such as X-ray baggage machines are being increasingly utilised.

External Debt of the Country

1782. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total amount of external debt of the country at present;

(b) what is the "Interest" burden on the country due to the same;

(c) whether it is a fact that much of India's external debt has been incurred for Oil purchases; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) The external debt of the country outstanding as at the end of 1990-91 is estimated to be Rs. 99,485 crores.

(b) The amount of interest to be paid during 1991-92 is estimated to be Rs. 5.348 crores.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Expenditure on Bank Administration

1783. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 61 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 26th November, 1991 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that enormous expenditure is incurred for propagating Hindi in the nationalised banks and if so what is the amount spent for the same upto the year 1991;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the expenditure of nationalised banks has shown a steep rise; and

(c) if so, what are the steps taken to minimise the expenditure on administration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Reserve Bank of India have reported that nationalised banks do not make separate allocation for implementation of the official language (Hindi) policy. The expenditure on this item is included under establishment and other administrative expenditure.

(b) and (c) The expenditure figures of nationalised banks for the last three years do not indicate a steep rise. However, Reserve Bank of India have been impressing upon the banks the need for economising expenditure.

Request for Soft loan by UCO Bank to Reserve Bank of India

1784. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minster of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that UCO bank has sought a Rs. 500 crore soft loan from Reserve Bank of India; and

(b) if so, when did Government recognise the sickness in UCO bank?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have not received any such request from UCO Bank.

(b) Performance of public sector banks is reviewed by the Government and Reserve Bank of India on an on-going basis. UCO Bank reported losses in their Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account for the first time for the year 1989-90.

Drug Trafficking in North Eastern Region

1785. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the whole of North Eastern Region and especially Barak Valley has turned into a hunting ground for drug traffickers;

(b) whether it is also a fact that police arrested a number of drug traffickers having link with international drug trafficking gang; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) No. Sir.

(b) and (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Extension of closing date of remittance of foreign exchange scheme

1786. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 394 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 26th November, 1991 and state: